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John of Ephesus and the *Lives of the Eastern Saints*,
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PREFACE

The Mediterranean world of late antiquity has in recent years gained popularity with scholars and the lay public both. A lacuna has been present in our studies thus far, however, in the case of a major and compelling writer from this era, John of Ephesus. Living in the sixth century, John led a varied career as a Monophysite monk, missionary, writer, and church leader. Two significant works by John remain extant: his *Ecclesiastical History* and his *Lives of the Eastern Saints*. John wrote in Syriac and his focus is often the eastern Byzantine provinces, especially his homeland Mesopotamia. But John's career took him throughout the empire of his day, and he knew the imperial court of Constantinople as intimately as he knew the villages of Amida's regions. John's writings are important in part because they concern a personal encounter with the full Byzantine world of his time, and in part because few writers from late antiquity have opened that world so vividly as he.

John lived through the period spanning the Monophysite movement's greatest successes and defeats. In his youth the Monophysites represented a formidable source of energy and creativity in the Byzantine realm; in his old age, John saw them not simply defeated but stalemated: discredited by the Chalcedonians on the Byzantine throne and incapacitated by their own internal bickerings. Within and beyond this frame of activity were the people of John's world. For John's home, the eastern provinces of Byzantium, the sixth century was above all a time of suffering. Their lands provided the battleground for war between Byzantium and Persia. Their monasteries and church communities, Monophy-

site in faith, endured persecutions by the Chalcedonian government. Famine and plague were chronically ubiquitous. It was a century when tragedy both accountable and capricious was the fabric of daily life.

John has received uneven treatment by modern scholars. Appreciation for his significance was first shown in the pamphlet by J. P. N. Land, *Joannes Bischof von Ephesos der erste syrische Kirchenhistoriker* (Leiden, 1856). Subsequent studies culminated in the monumental work of A. Djakonov, *Ioann Efesskiy* (Petrograd, 1908)—still the only monograph devoted to John. Further efforts followed, primarily textual, and critical editions of John's writings were published in the 1920s and 1930s, accompanied by translations into English for the *Lives of the Eastern Saints* and into Latin for the *Ecclesiastical History*. Nonetheless, John's works continued to be utilized mainly by Syriac scholars, while historians of the late Roman and early Byzantine periods persisted in sidestepping his contribution.

In recent decades, however, scholars of late antiquity have turned to a more comprehensive treatment of the materials available to us, and a greater appreciation for Syriac sources has been apparent. An upsurge in the interest shown for John of Ephesus' *Ecclesiastical History* has accompanied this wider view, and not least because John's records contrast with the contemporary accounts of the Greek literati.

For the most part, John's *Lives of the Eastern Saints* have not shared the limelight. The *Lives* have been used primarily for the information they contain about certain key figures and events in the ecclesiastical crises of the sixth century. Such selective treatment bypasses both what John's *Lives* are about and what they have to offer—as may be seen in two notable exceptions to this situation, Peter Brown's "Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity: A Parting of the Ways" and Evelyn Patlagean's *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance 4e–7e siècle*.

This study is an attempt to bring John's *Lives of the Eastern Saints* into view. They provide a different perspective from that of his *History*. Rather than a chronological record of important events, one finds here what is often lacking in such records: the daily world of ordinary people, and how they coped with war, plague, famine, and persecution. Here one sees, above all, Syrian asceticism fully developed. Its practitioners are at home in the small world of the villager, and sometimes, too, in the larger one of the imperial court. But the Syrian ascetics also reflected their times. By the end of the sixth century, even the vitality of this movement had been worn down.

John of Ephesus and his *Lives of the Eastern Saints* provide an opportunity to learn about life in a time and place of drastic events. Here we

can see the ways in which those who have chosen extreme lives are forced by external circumstances into extremities even more severe. In writing the stories of holy men and women whom he had known, John shows us the confrontation between extreme experience and the human necessity of shaping that experience through narrative.

The hesitation that scholars have shown in the instance of John's *Lives* in fact stems largely from its literary form. For despite John's personal acquaintance with his subjects, and despite his professed intention to record in the *Lives* only what he himself has seen or can verify, hagiography alters both an author's material and its presentation. The nature of hagiography does not invalidate the historicity of John's *Lives*, but it does require that we read the text with a particular understanding.

Hagiography is a literary genre in which form is as important as content in understanding the text. Its task is to render the world of human experience comprehensible. It does this in two ways: first, by celebrating the saint (whether real or legendary) as one through whom God acted in the realm of human life; and second, by using a standardized language of literary *topoi* that identified the saint as saint and interpreted the saint's work as that of divine agency. Recognizing the formulaic, non-historical language of hagiography opens the route for treating the standardization itself as historical material. These texts offer us historical information, even in the most stringent sense, only if we can ask the appropriate questions. Standardization in hagiographical language is not a static matter. Favorite themes change; and the criteria of sanctity itself change in accordance with fluctuations in the values of society. Standard hagiographical themes, their periods of fashion and forms of expression, reveal the subconscious concerns of their societies and serve to establish a larger sense of order for those whom they are written to guide.

How, then, can we approach hagiography so as to evaluate the interaction of formulaic and historical material? The text must be heard on its own terms as well as in its hagiographical context; one must separate the standardized material from the author's perspective and establish how and why the author is using the hagiographic medium. There are clues internal to the text: the author's style, emphases, choices and viewpoints, and the author's position as distinct from the subject's. There are also external clues by which to measure the internal evidence: other sources—hagiographical, archaeological, archival, historiographical—and other information can be brought to bear upon the text. The consistency and coherence of a text, the interplay between an author's intent and content, analyses of comparative and contrasting material—all of

these matters are tools by which we can listen more carefully to a text. In the listening, we can discern what the text is saying, and what we can learn from it.

John of Ephesus' *Lives of the Eastern Saints* is a work of hagiography in the historical rather than the legendary tradition of saints' lives. Unlike many works of this kind, John's collection is not primarily stereotyped or didactic. It is a work incorporating a strikingly personal element, as John not only participated in much of what he sets down but also is actively present in his role as author. In the present study, John himself stands at the center. As will be seen, his individualistic manner is constantly apparent; more than a matter of style, John produces a form of hagiography peculiarly his own. His circumstances do much to encourage his individuality.

The purpose of the present study is to explore the relationship and interaction between asceticism and society in the sixth-century Byzantine East. In particular, we are concerned with how this relationship works for the Monophysite ascetics, what factors influenced it, and what the consequences and implications may have been.

How do we see the particular historical circumstances reflected in the ascetic experience John describes hagiographically? As John tells us, it was a time when stylites descended from their pillars to enter the arena of religious controversy; anchorites returned to towns and cities to care for the laity in the absence of exiled church leaders; exile became a part of monastic practice; the needs of the laity overrode the sentiments of bishops in the formation of a separate church hierarchy; and women took leadership roles they would otherwise have shunned. The situation of religious controversy was compounded by war with Persians, invasions by Huns, extended famine, bubonic plague, and collective hysteria. We can see the contrast of Mesopotamia in its calamity with the expansion and prosperity experienced elsewhere in the Byzantine Empire during the first half of the sixth century; we can see also the contrast of provincial life to that of the cosmopolitan centers, whether Antioch, Jerusalem, or Constantinople. Our goal here is to break the religious experience down into its component parts, in search of the meaning ascribed to the larger event.

Establishing the historicity of John's text is thus neither the methodology nor the point of this study, nor does it attempt to prove a thesis. Rather, it seeks to see a situation: What is the story John tells? How are we to understand it? This is not a book about John of Ephesus as a historian. I chose to write about his *Lives* because they are not the history of his time but rather the story of the people who live in his world. I will

utilize his *Ecclesiastical History* only as a complementary supplement to the *Lives*. My purpose is to understand what Syriac spirituality meant to these people, both those who practiced an ascetic career and those who did not.

Consequently, this is also not a book about the Monophysite movement, nor is its originating point of reference the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Rather, the point of origin is Syrian asceticism, its roots and development. In this particular instance, the ascetics are also Monophysites. While the church crisis colored their situation, as the book emphasizes, they are not themselves the entire Monophysite body (far from it), nor are they the reason for the separation of the churches. Their spirituality, their asceticism, and their responses to the crises of their times do not depend on their Monophysitism but rather on their Syriac heritage. The continuity of that heritage is ultimately more important than the change brought by persecution.

Because the material is generally unfamiliar to scholars and students of late antiquity, this study starts with an introduction to the Syrian Orient of the sixth century. I do this by focusing on particular texts that illustrate the themes important for John of Ephesus; there is a context in which the ascetic practice John records makes sense in practical as well as symbolical terms. Syrian asceticism did not develop through a sequence of events. It developed in a collective experience, in which individuals and communities pursued a variety of goals for various reasons. The people rather than the events were the determining factors, and they overlapped, clashed, and harmonized in patterns rather than in a clear progression. The same is true of the spirituality studied in this book. Events affected it and forced people to make certain decisions or changes; those circumstances are central to this study insofar as they reveal the people and their spirituality more clearly.

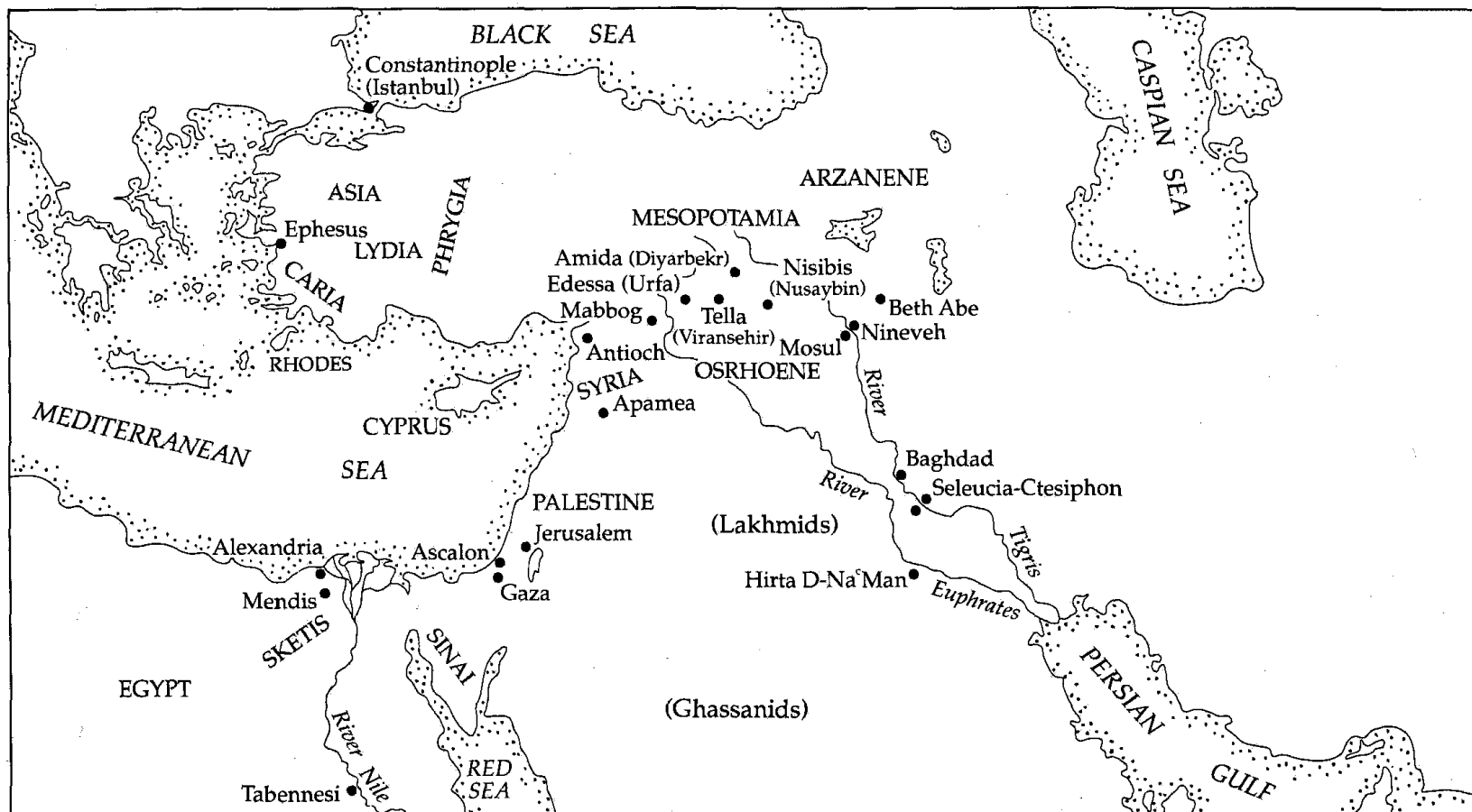
The first chapter then introduces John himself, his writings, and the literary issues of the *Lives*. The following chapters focus on those events that shaped John's collection: the development of asceticism in a time of crisis (chapter 2); the plague of madness in the city of Amida, as a collective societal response to the years of calamity (chapter 3); the impact of exile on monastic practice, and the functioning of monastic communities as refugee camps (chapter 4); mission, the breakdown of Byzantine imperial ideology in the East, and the formation of separate churches (chapter 5); the fluctuating position of women (chapter 6); and, finally, an assessment of John's hagiographical purpose (chapter 7).

In using John's *Lives* to the end, we will work with the awareness that John is writing hagiography for a specific reason and with a specific

intent. In order to see what John is doing and how and why he does it, the *Lives* will be treated throughout this study together with contrasting and complementary writings of late antiquity, both Greek and Syriac. We will seek to clarify the singular experience contained in the work. These are particular people in a particular world. To see them on their own terms and to hear their story as truly theirs is to touch history as a living thing.

Hagiography is about a theology of activity. The careers of the saints are one expression of this theology. The writing of hagiography is another.

Since no one can speak for John of Ephesus better than he himself, I have illustrated this study with his own words as much as possible. For the most part I quote from the translation of E. W. Brooks, though occasionally I have altered the text or, where noted, substituted my own.



John of Ephesus's World

· III ·

AMIDA: THE MEASURE OF MADNESS

John of Ephesus presents to his readers the ascetic model (and its variations) by which he himself was trained. Although the *Lives of the Eastern Saints* succeed in placing this model in a larger context, Amida's history gave a specific shape to the asceticism that developed in its regions; more pointedly, Amida's experiences during the sixth century provide us with a measure for the urgency and compassion underlying John's *Lives*.

ASCETIC ROOTS

From its inception, asceticism in Amida and its territory was enmeshed in the volatile existence of the city itself. A metropolitan city in the late Roman province of north Mesopotamia, Amida lay strategically on the Tigris River, at the eastern frontiers of the empire, near to the Persian borders.¹ Constantius embellished the city in the mid-fourth century amidst frequent disruptions by the Sasanid monarchy. Soon after, in 359/60, the Persians arrived, devastating Amida and its environs; insecurity was a given factor in the area. The desire for an ascetic presence shared with the wider Christian realm by Amida was thus tinged by concern for Amida's own fate.²

The growth of asceticism in Amida's territory concurred with that of the Syrian Orient as a whole. By the early years of the fourth century

Amida's regions harbored individuals of noteworthy ascetic practice who pursued an anchoritic life in loosely gathered groups.³ It was not long before the city itself could boast a growing monastic presence, and before the end of the century it was clear that asceticism and society had settled down to a coexistence. The monastery of Mar John Urtaya, to which John of Ephesus belonged, was founded during this period; John of Ephesus preserves the oral tradition of its community.⁴ Mar John, called Urtaya because of his missionary work in Anzetene, chose to make a cell for ascetic seclusion outside Amida but near the city walls, around the year 389. He settled near a tiny site already known as a place of ascetic practice: a few huts belonging to a distinguished solitary named Mar 'fwrsm. John's spiritual labors soon won him a following and his first two disciples came from the monastery of the Edessenes, by this time relocated at Amida. When Mar John died, his community had "attained to a large increase in buildings and belongings and increase of brotherhood up to the number of fifty men."⁵

The early choice of an urban rather than a rural setting for the Amidan ascetics differs from that of their counterparts Jacob of Nisibis and Julian Saba, who chose to stay within reach of settled communities while dwelling apart in the wilderness. But Amida's practical problems were considerable. The threat of invasion was constant; an isolated recluse was not exempt from danger unless utterly remote, and proximity to the shelter of fortified walls and communal protection was a simpler alternative.

By the fifth century Amida's citizens and ascetics seem to have settled into a profitable coexistence. The tradition that John of Ephesus relates for Mar John Urtaya again presents the picture.⁶ After the death of its founder, there followed a steady stream of leaders for the monastery right through the fifth century, all of whom are credited with expanding the community's size in numbers and in buildings. During the second half of the century, however, a dispute broke out among the brethren with regard to their abbot Abraham, himself a native of the city. After governing the monastery well for some time, "unfounded ill-feeling" arose, and Abraham was charged with embezzling the monastery's funds for the sake of his family.⁷

The ensuing clash led to Abraham's angry resignation, but he did not abandon his ascetic career; rather, he practiced it in seclusion at his home in the city, in accordance with the Syrian tradition of individual vocation. Apparently, urban connections with the monasteries had reached the stage where monks were prone to petty intrigues concerning the city's inhabitants—problems indicative of growing wealth and property for ascetic communities, and of growing integration with the social structure of the city.

Abraham's successor was another Abraham, under whom the monastery rose to its greatest fame and reached the size of four hundred monks. This Abraham, "being also formidable and severe and stern toward all the chief men and magnates of the city,"⁸ became known even to the emperor Zeno, who summoned him to Constantinople. Received with honor at the imperial court, he was granted substantial gifts, including a village in Amida's neighboring district of Ingilene. Eventually, he was consecrated to a bishopric in Anzetene.

Although the monastery of Mar John Urtaya was perhaps the most acclaimed of Amida's ascetic communities, it by no means eclipsed all the others in reputation. With the advent of the sixth century, the city of Amida was known for the number of famous monastic communities it sheltered in and around its walls.⁹ It was at this point that Amida's inhabitants were caught up in an acute crisis of circumstance, affecting local ascetic practice and its place in local urban society.

THE SIXTH CENTURY: THE SETTING

To read the Syrian chroniclers on the beginning of the sixth century is to see that they expected the worst: the turn of the century had hardly been auspicious. From 499 to 502, calamity repeatedly struck the Syrian Orient. Locusts came in masses, bringing famine and disease; earthquakes struck town and country; rivers overflowed their banks; city walls burst; twice, the sun was eclipsed; and burning signs appeared in the skies.¹⁰ For Amida, disaster was imminent.

In the autumn of 502, the Persian army under the command of its ruler Kawad laid siege to Amida.¹¹ The siege lasted three months, with both sides suffering from the preexisting famine and the Persians suffering in particular from the onset of winter. Various devices were employed to no avail against Amida's impregnable walls, while those inside battled valiantly in return. Gradually the attackers grew disheartened, and the besieged overconfident. The Persians were on the brink of departing when Kawad gained new determination—attributed to a divine vision from Christ or to a premonition of the Persian Magi—indicating that success would soon follow. Indeed, a single lapse in Amida's night watch allowed the Persians sudden entry in January 503. Sources claim that eighty thousand people were slaughtered as the Persians sacked the city.¹²

Amida's fall was of serious consequence.¹³ Claims were made that the defeat was an act of divine retribution for Amida's impiety. The accusation was raised, and became set in later tradition, that monks from

the monastery of Mar John Urtaya betrayed the city: drinking too much wine one night, they fell asleep and failed to raise the alarm when the Persians scaled the walls.¹⁴ However, the charges seem unlikely.

In the end, the monks of Mar John suffered a particularly gruesome fate.¹⁵ Years later John of Ephesus met an old monk in Palestine, who wept when he heard that John was from Amida. He had been a brother in the community of Mar John Urtaya when the Persians took the city. He recalled for John how the brethren had sought refuge inside the city walls when the Persian army arrived; and how the conquerors upon entering the city had butchered the monks, killing ninety in succession before pausing for captives and booty—the point at which he had escaped, vowing never to return to Amida.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the slanderous story of the monks serves to signify how visible they were in the city: it may well have been an attempt to explain why their holy presence had not protected Amida from the catastrophe.

The suggestion has been made that these accounts may indicate a changing political situation, that by the early sixth century anti-Chalcedonian dissidents of the east were prepared to turn anti-Roman in times of war.¹⁷ But we have no contemporary evidence of disloyalty. On the contrary, the more trustworthy sources do not specify who was on guard duty that night. The account of "Joshua the Stylite" is sober but fair-minded: one cold January night, those on guard duty drank too much wine. Some fell asleep, and others went home because of the rain.

Whether then through this remissness, as we think, or by an act of treachery, as people said, or as a chastisement from God, the Persians got possession of the walls of Amid by means of a ladder, without the gates being opened or the walls breached.¹⁸

The Roman army responded immediately; it was said that the emperor Anastasius was sick with grief when he learned of Amida's plight. By the summer of 503 the Romans were encamped against the city, but faced with its unbreachable walls, as well as their own internal problems, they shortly abandoned it. In 504 they returned, prepared for a drawn-out effort at recovery. The effects of this second siege on those inside the city walls, Persian or citizen, were merciless. Famine prevailed; charges of cannibalism and other desperate acts grew daily. The Amidan women suffered further: as food supplies decreased, the Persians imprisoned the city's men in order to keep available food for themselves; they left the women loose, however, to use as slaves and bed partners. Thus raped and abused—but not fed—the women especially were charged with cannibalism. As it is clear that men, too, were reduced to the same efforts for survival, the women's situation can only

have differed in this matter because of their relative freedom of movement in the city.

The Roman siege camp was also suffering, from weather as well as from lack of supplies. At last, with both attackers and attacked in serious straits, an agreement was reached in the winter of 505. Amida was returned to Roman hands, a shell of its former self.¹⁹

At this point, Procopius' narrative implies that the surviving Amidans forgot their misfortunes, a misleading impression, even on the basis of his own account.²⁰ Before a generation had passed, war was renewed under Kawad's successor Khosroes, against Justin I and then against Justinian; a final treaty was not to be signed until 562. Although Amida was not again a specified battle site, it was garrisoned by the Romans; and with Mesopotamia repeatedly invaded in the course of these campaigns, the area remained unsafe.²¹

Moreover, the Persian invasions brought an attendant and more diffused problem: in their wake followed the Hunnic tribes of Hephthalitae, who appear to have made continual, if sporadic, incursions into the eastern Roman provinces during these years.²² Whether for their own purposes or in pursuit of the Persians, John of Ephesus depicts repeated raids by the Hephthalitae.²³ Some stories surely were derived from the Persian use of Hunnic mercenaries in their own armies; in this capacity the Hephthalitae seem to have proved unruly and prone to unauthorized plundering.²⁴ And they carried out their own independent incursions, notably in 515 and 531/2, which wrought serious damage in Roman territory and substantiated the common fear of invasion.²⁵

While war against outsiders persisted, internal relations were rapidly breaking down. Religious persecution against the Monophysites commenced with the accession of Justin I—"Justin the Terrible," as one Monophysite source called him²⁶—in 519. Justin shifted the imperial religious policy to impose the Chalcedonian faith by force;²⁷ this policy continued thereafter under his successors, despite occasional mitigation. Amida in this instance, too, became the scene of particular suffering.

The persecutions themselves were uneven, in both place and duration, and depended largely on the patriarch or bishop at hand. Some were perhaps more efficient than the emperor had envisioned.²⁸ But an area so entrenched in Monophysite faith as Mesopotamia would provide the most threatening resistance to the government's aims. The situation might well seem to call for severe measures.

When the patriarch Severus of Antioch was deposed and banished in 518, he was soon succeeded by Paul "the Jew," a staunch Chalcedonian.²⁹ In the course of the persecutions that Paul set in motion between

519 and 521, Abraham bar Kaili—the archvillain of Syrian tradition—attained the metropolitan seat at Amida, which he then held for thirty years.³⁰ Paul's excessive cruelty seems to have led to his replacement in 521 by Euphrasius, a Chalcedonian perhaps by fashion. Euphrasius may have alleviated the persecutions somewhat, but his death during Antioch's earthquake of 526 was seen by Monophysites as a fitting end.³¹ He was succeeded immediately by Ephrem, a native of Amida and a government official of some power. It was the combination of Ephrem and Abraham bar Kaili that unleashed suffering once more upon Amida.

The accession of Ephrem to the patriarchal seat of Antioch was greeted by a menacing omen: the sun was obscured for eighteen months. Reports indicate that it was not eclipsed, nor did it disappear; it simply diminished in warmth for an unbroken year and a half.³² Ephrem was indeed a daunting figure. Although Syrian, he had received a Greek education and gradually rose through the civil ranks to become *comes orientis* around the year 522. While in this capacity, he was chosen to be patriarch; as civil administrator he had proved himself competent and efficient, and even his religious enemies would later attest his skills as an official.³³ His consecration was thus significant on two accounts: first, as an indication of the close interaction and shared responsibility between high civil and ecclesiastical posts at this time;³⁴ and second, because his secular offices enabled Ephrem to bring a military escort to his throne. During his eighteen years as patriarch, Ephrem would use his forces freely.

Ephrem promoted the Chalcedonian cause with such severity that our sources are polarized on his behalf. He was influential within Chalcedonian ranks and could, when alarmed, carry out consultation with Pope Agapetus of Rome.³⁵ Although trained in civil administration, he was a respectable theologian.³⁶ Chalcedonian sources depict him as a wise fatherly figure who sought to convert Monophysites by gentle persuasion.³⁷ Moreover, as patriarch he continued to embellish the city of Antioch, looking after its affairs much as he had earlier.³⁸ But Monophysite sources viewed Ephrem in a different light, as one who encouraged a thorough persecution throughout the East. These writers saw his support of the Chalcedonian faith as opportunism and were outraged by his employment of civil troops.³⁹

Ephrem's prime henchman was Abraham bar Kaili, a figure rarely treated by scholars but whose role in the Monophysite persecutions was felt all too keenly by his contemporaries. Although he held the bishopric of Amida for thirty years,⁴⁰ Syrian tradition has woven his activity to-

gether with that of Ephrem. Abraham obviously conducted a harsher campaign than his superior, and while he acted at the patriarch's behest, he appears to have been more of an extremist. He may have been doing Ephrem's dirty work for him. Unfortunately, surviving evidence on Abraham is based almost entirely on John of Ephesus' *Ecclesiastical History*. One might wish for Chalcedonian accounts to balance the picture.⁴¹ Their silence may be instructive, however, indicating a lack of information or interest. It is also evidence that the Chalcedonian presence in Mesopotamia was confined both to the upper echelons of the imperially sponsored civil and ecclesiastical administration and to the army, a case much like Egypt's. On the other hand, both Ephrem and Abraham were natives of Amida; further, if Abraham served as bishop for so many years, there must have been a sizeable Chalcedonian presence in Amida itself.

Abraham is charged with more than exiling the faithful and compelling Chalcedonian communion. Monophysite sources, based on John of Ephesus, report that he kept a census count on his citizens to ensure that not even a miscarried fetus or a stillborn child escaped Chalcedonian baptism; and that he invaded holy sanctuaries, tortured religious prisoners, crucified and burned dissidents, and was disrespectful of their corpses. The most sinister charge was that he employed a band of lepers; these he sent to pollute Monophysite property with their disease or to be prison companions for those disagreeing with him. Nonetheless, it was in concerted effort with Ephrem that Abraham's most brutal steps were taken, following Justinian's final banishment of Severus of Antioch in 536. Ephrem's "descent to the east" during 536–537 was considered the height of the persecutions in the Syrian Orient, but its worst crimes have been attributed to Abraham. As a parting shot, Michael the Syrian claims that Abraham was a gluttonous lover of wine, foppishly vain in dress, who conducted religious ceremonies with ostentatious pomp.⁴²

The Persian campaigns compounded the persecutions and brought the return of famine as a chronic situation in Amida's territory. Local plagues broke out and were finally subsumed into the Great Bubonic Plague that struck in 542. Conditions were ripe for disease to flourish, and the Great Plague at its peak is reported by John of Ephesus to have killed thirty thousand people from Amida and its lands in the span of three months.⁴³ As elsewhere in the Byzantine East, famine followed the epidemic for those who survived, and outbreaks of the disease continued to recur for the remainder of the century. Our sources record an

unbroken succession of natural and human calamities for Amida's regions as the wars and religious coercion continued also. Finally, in the year 560, the city of Amida went mad.

The accounts of the "plague of madness" are no less chilling for their confusion.⁴⁴ The sickness was called "dreadful, abominable, and hideous," and "maniacal and diabolical." Without exception, the madness was seen as an act of divine vengeance for the sins of the city. Later tradition also sought a divine cure for the "plague" and added the figure of Jacob Burd'aya to the event. Legend claimed that he predicted the suffering in advance, attributing it to those who had submitted to the pressures of persecution and joined the Chalcedonian ranks, and that the saint finally returned to exorcise the city.⁴⁵ But the primary version, on which the chronicles draw, is from John of Ephesus' *Ecclesiastical History*. John was a contemporary and, although not present in Amida at the time, well informed on events there.

John's account and those based on it show considerable insight when describing the context of the outbreak. They begin by summarizing the preceding forty years of war, persecution, plague, and famine, and the resulting persistent level of anxiety in the city. At last, on this occasion, a false report that the Persians were again attacking Amida and pillaging the countryside proved a sudden cause for panic.

It was then that the madness descended. People dashed around barking like dogs, bleating like sheep, clucking like hens; children ran crazed through the graveyards, throwing each other about, shouting obscenely, biting each other, hanging upside down, crying with trumpetlike wails; no one recognized his own home. Taken to the churches by the few who remained sane, the crowds foamed at the mouth and claimed with rage that only the intervention of the apostles and martyrs prevented them from massacring and plundering the entire city. The madness lasted some months, perhaps as long as a year. It struck elsewhere in the Orient, in Tella, Edessa, Charrhae, and Maipherqat; but no other place was reputed to have suffered like Amida.⁴⁶

Despite its arresting scope in numbers and duration, the Amidan plague of madness is not without parallel. Other periods of history have witnessed similar outbreaks of protracted mass hysteria; significantly, these have occurred under similarly compounded conditions of famine, general want, disease, religious unrest, and natural calamity.⁴⁷ In Amida's case, the symptoms displayed all match the views of insanity prevalent during antiquity, both for the Oriental and Greco-Roman worlds.⁴⁸ Moreover, the other cities that suffered the same plague—Constantina/Tella, Edessa, Charrhae, and Martyropolis/Maipherqat—all experienced a suc-

cession of natural and political disasters nearly as unbroken as Amida's.⁴⁹ The account of Amida's plague of madness, then, stands as testimony to the fact that society, like the individual, does have a breaking point: the course of events that the sixth century brought to Amida could well have broached such a limit.⁵⁰

The particular tragedy of Amida, and the horrors leading up to it, epitomized that of the Monophysite Syrian Orient as a whole during the sixth century. In Syrian tradition, the memory of those years did not lose the sense of trauma.⁵¹ One would expect such times to raise the potency of the ascetic presence; but just as the lay populace would turn to the power of sanctity with particular urgency, so too would the ascetics be compelled to respond from their own suffering and involvement in the plight of the world. City and wilderness, the poles of ascetic experience, in these circumstances lost their distinctive boundaries and came to inhabit a realm of mutual crisis. It was this mutual realm that John of Ephesus elucidated in his accounts of the holy men and women of Amida.

AMIDA: THE DEVIL WITHOUT AND THE DEVIL WITHIN

The hermit of late antiquity had sought the holy by inhabiting a physical space—in desert or wilderness—as separate from the space of civilized society as the spiritual realm was from the physical. Even when society extended itself to include the holy, by incorporating the functional employment of the holy man or woman into its workings,⁵² the space of the ascetic presence remained separate from the urban space of village or city, whether it was contained within a separate monastic complex or, more frequently, outside the city walls.⁵³ The populace came out to the holy presence, as they had to Simeon the Stylite.⁵⁴ Only the purest could achieve the estrangement from the world evidenced by the holy fool, living immersed in, yet untouched by, the debauchery of civilization.⁵⁵

But the territory of Amida precluded the privacy of an external setting for ascetic practice, and even the inner space of the ascetic's spiritual life could not offer refuge for any length of time. The Persian invasions provide a concrete example. Procopius relates that in 503 during their command over Amida, they laid waste with fire the sanctuary of a holy man called Simeon, near to the city.⁵⁶

The intermittent incursions by Huns as well as by Persians were as disturbing for the ascetics, even those living in seclusion, as they were for the village or town communities. Maro the Stylite had stood on his

pillar near Amida for twenty years when he saw a vision foretelling the arrival of a raiding party of Huns. His horror, mirroring the reaction soon to be heard among the villagers, frightened the brethren of his community. Most of them fled with the townspeople to a nearby fortress—again, the proximity is instructive—while three loyal brothers stayed behind with Maro. Fortunately, they escaped the band's notice unharmed.⁵⁷

However, such raids left behind a more insidious threat. In constant fear, the populace sought comfort in stories of divine protection. Thus Procopius tells of the anchorite Jacob, dwelling a day's journey from Amida, who was discovered by a group of marauding Hephthalitae but succeeded in rendering them motionless when they tried to attack him. They remained paralyzed until the Persian king himself came to beg their release, which Jacob worked with a prayer. Faced with such power, Kawad then offered the hermit any favor he wished, presuming money would be the request. But Jacob asked that he be allowed to shelter all who came to him as fugitives from war. We are told that the pledge was kept, and many sought refuge there as word went out of what had taken place.⁵⁸ Similarly, John of Ephesus tells how the young monk Z'ura (before his stylite days) had taken refuge in a fortress from an invading host of Huns. Sent out later to see if his monastery was still intact, he encountered the raiding band, and one of its members rushed upon him. Z'ura, too, rendered him motionless until his comrades had departed and then allowed him to go free without harm.⁵⁹

Anxiety produced a fear both articulated and internalized. When Simeon the Mountaineer cursed the inhabitants of a remote village for willfully hindering his efforts on their behalf, they shouted at him, "If you think that your curses are so well heard, go and curse these Huns who are coming and making havoc of creation, and let them die."⁶⁰ More pointedly, ascetics now waged battle with demons appearing in the guise of marauders. Paul the Anchorite set out to exorcise a cave notorious for its demonic possession, located on a lonely stretch of the Tigris and needed as shelter for traders and travelers. For many days he stayed enclosed in the cave, waging battle against fiends of every shape and kind. At last, in an effort to drive the holy man out, the demons assailed him in the likeness of villagers fleeing in panic from approaching invaders; when Paul remained unmoved they put on their most fearful aspect, guised as the Huns themselves. It was the mark of Paul's sanctity that he was able to banish even these powerful forces.⁶¹

The sixth century, then, presented the Amidan ascetics with no separate "space," external or internal, and no escape or retreat. Their tradi-

tion had incorporated the physical dangers of Amida's territory into their ascetic practice by the custom of living cenobitically within close reach of local towns and villages.⁶² But when wars and raiders drove the ascetics inside the city walls, they confronted a new danger. No privileged place awaited them as monastics, except the compounding of physical danger and an equally severe moral peril. For while the ascetics might suffer along with citizens the hardships of invasions, famine, and plague, it was the religious element, monks, nuns and clergy, who bore the brunt of the persecutions against the Monophysites.

The Amidan monasteries, fierce in their opposition to Chalcedonian persuasion and influential with the public, presented the most accessible targets for their Chalcedonian persecutors. Not surprisingly, the first step in any persecution campaign was directed at them and marked by the monks' banishment. The rhetoric their plight evoked was the language of martyrdom: John of Ephesus described them, "having all, small as well as great, been fired by zeal for the faith, and having been duly girded with the armour of truth, they also entered valiantly and heroically and courageously into the struggle against the defenders of the corrupt synod of Chalcedon."⁶³ And the experience of exile proved to be horrendous for the Amidan monastic community. They were "driven from place to place and from region to region,"⁶⁴ under circumstances that left no illusions as to the life suffered by refugees.

The first expulsion came soon after the accession of Justin I, around the year 520.⁶⁵ After much discouraging travel and effort, the exiled Amidan community finally halted in a remote area at a monastery called Mar Mama.⁶⁶ Despite unpleasant conditions, they stayed there five years before deciding to return to a district bordering on Amida in order to be near their former home. They passed several years in this new place at the monastery of the Poplars, under crowded and makeshift arrangements. Owing to Justinian's succession to the throne and to Theodora's subsequent efforts,⁶⁷ they were allowed to return, after nine and a half years, to their home city. "And they found their convents destroyed and demolished and knocked to pieces, and turned to earth." At once they set about rebuilding their former dwellings and reorganizing the religious assemblies of the Amidan populace, "so that few [of those who had gone over to the Chalcedonians] remained with the Synodites."⁶⁸

Such behavior was obviously upsetting to the authorities; the monastic group was not long back before a new expulsion order was again issued against them.⁶⁹ They left, but the effort was wearing and their size had diminished.⁷⁰ Stopping first at the monastery of the Sycamores, they were pursued by Roman soldiers who tormented the surrounding vil-

lagers until they pleaded with the ascetics to leave their district so as to alleviate their suffering. Reestablishing themselves at the monastery of the Poplars, they were soon sought out by the vigilant Ephrem and his troops. This time their dispersion was frightening. For according to John of Ephesus, Ephrem "sent armed and armoured hosts of fighting men against them as if to fight against barbarians, and they expelled and ejected and scattered and dispersed them over the lands."⁷¹ Moreover, it was winter; many were ill or old, and travel was dangerous. The Amidan community splintered over the East.

After some twenty years or more, the survivors gradually reassembled in Amida, once again finding their former homes razed. They were not long in the occupation of rebuilding before a third expulsion order drove them out again. When John of Ephesus completed his history of the Amidan monasteries at the death of Justinian, they had been living under the shadow of persecution for more than forty years.⁷² Under these conditions, ascetic practice was not only compelled to bend to the circumstances—many a stylite was forced down from his pillar—but also to fulfill perceived obligations to the lay populace while under duress. Those obligations were only partially manifest in the social occupations of the ascetic as patron and healer; their greater import lay in ensuring that the Monophysite stance of the people did not lapse. The commitment to such a responsibility was clearly shown in the continuous efforts of the Amidan ascetics to return to the city, or to remain in close contact with it even when in exile. In the course of the crisis, the Amidan ascetics responded in two ways, retaining their practices as a body in exile while maintaining an "underground" presence in the city itself. But in either place, the space occupied by the holy had lost its separateness.

THE ASCETIC RESPONSE

The influence of the eastern monks on the attitudes and beliefs of common people is well attested by the sources for late antiquity.⁷³ Their constancy and zeal contributed to the Monophysite dispute an ingredient of popular faith, and not simply of theological debate.⁷⁴ For the Amidan ascetics, however, the immediacy of the religious crisis was matched by the cumulative impact of local natural disasters and political events. The ascetic ideal and motivation were thus profoundly affected by the state of the temporal world in a time of great need: the potency of ascetic actions rose.⁷⁵

The desert had ceased to be a place of solitude. Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor describes the communities that grew up in the wilderness during the persecutions:

And so the desert was at peace, and was abundantly supplied with a population of believers who lived in it, and fresh ones who were every day added to them and aided in swelling the numbers of their brethren, some from a desire to visit their brethren out of Christian love, and others again because they were being driven from country to country by the bishops in the cities. And there grew up, as it were, a commonwealth of illustrious and believing priests, and a tranquil brotherhood with them; and they were united in love and abounded in mutual affection, and they were beloved and acceptable in the sight of everyone; and nothing was lacking, for the honoured heads of the corporation, which is composed of all the members of the body, accompanied them.⁷⁶

Hence it was with pride that John of Ephesus stressed the continuity of tradition in ascetic practice for the Amidan monasteries, even while they lived in a present state of dispersal. The various communities continued, seemingly without interruption by their circumstances, the customary practices of fasting, vigils, genuflexions, weeping, and the use of standing poles and other aids. Further, they continued their role in society at large: admonishing and advising the local populace wherever they settled, healing the sick, and exorcising demons.⁷⁷ But they acted now, as pseudo-Zachariah indicates, in concert with the community that the wilderness fostered, bonded together by their common plight. Thus John of Ephesus praised the united body of Amidans, "the separate character of each convent being preserved in this only, the fact that its own brotherhood was separate, and its belongings and archimandrite and its priests, while all the affairs of them all were administered in common, together with all the spiritual labours of brotherly concord."⁷⁸

The Amidan monasteries had for generations upheld a high-standing reputation for practice as well as for learning; their fame would spread on both accounts during their ordeal. In his history of the monastery of Mar John Urtaya, John of Ephesus records a faultless succession of abbots in the course of the persecutions.⁷⁹ Moreover, he reaffirms the monastery's ties to the city of Amida itself. Not only were the remains of the leaders who died in exile returned, when it became possible, to the monastery's own burial grounds; but further, the abbot appointed during the final period of persecution in which John wrote was born of a distinguished family of the city and had been in the monastery since he was a child.⁸⁰ Similarly, John saw fit, despite the disruptions of the times, to elaborate on the lengthy traditional method of gaining entry and serving

as novice in another Amidan monastery, emphasizing the commitment to correct training.⁸¹ Nor was the image of the Amidan monasteries enhanced by John alone. John of Tella had immediately welcomed the Amidan exiles he encountered, knowing their place of origin and its high standards in ascetic practices and religious education.⁸² Above all, wandering ascetics continued, with confidence, to join Amida's communities in exile, just as they had previously, so constant was the reputation they upheld.⁸³

In the *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, the few accounts John offers of ascetics devoted purely to the pursuit of private worship are presented in this context. They are people who came to the Amidan communities before and during the periods of persecution: Abbi, who wore rags and passed his days reading the Gospels in ecstasy, speaking and eating rarely and always with tears; a poor stranger who would not reveal his name or anything of his travels, who meditated with mournful humility throughout the nights and allowed no morsel of food or drop of water to pass his lips without a prayer of thanksgiving, thus taking one hundred sips to drink a cup; and Zacharias, who shunned all contact with others, secretly carrying a pebble in his mouth to impede speech and mortifying his flesh with knots of rope to prevent unworthy thoughts from finding their way into his mind.⁸⁴

These accounts stand in seeming contrast to John's emphasis on asceticism practiced within an urban setting or in close contact with village populations, for his usual ideal is that of an asceticism ministering to a crisis-ridden society. But the contrast becomes less when one realizes where he makes room for the virtuosi of private ascetic practice. For the exiled communities, these holy individuals ensured the validity of their tradition and of their spiritual authority, as much in time of peace as in trial, under the strongly politicizing pressures that beset the Monophysite population.

It is with this intent that John relates the story of a monk who joined the Amidan monasteries while they were settled at Mar Mama.⁸⁵ Since it was uncanonical for a monk to leave his monastery to enter another without an official release, the Amidan archimandrite carefully examined this monk as to his previous training and present status. In fact he had not been released and had lied in order to join their community. Then a local plague broke out, and in the cramped living quarters of the exiles it raged freely, killing eighty-four of the Amidan brethren as well as some of their guests. The newly received monk, too, fell ill and was divinely punished for his perjury by hovering paralyzed just outside death. The brethren finally guessed his situation and stood themselves

surety to gain his release, sending a deacon to petition his former archimandrite. As soon as this was done, the man died. Such an account underscored the Amidans' authoritative status, illustrating their care with canons was no less than that with faith.⁸⁶

In the same way, John stresses an unbroken pattern in the Amidan ascetics' social involvement, despite their flight to unfamiliar territory. The personal trial of exile, with its hazards and discomforts, was not considered a release from an ascetic's obligation to others. Hala, a monk at the monastery of the Edessenes in Amida, had devoted himself for some years to caring for the destitute and strangers in the city.⁸⁷ When the monastery was expelled and its property confiscated or hidden, Hala was beside himself, having nothing with which to comfort those in need. At once he set about finding new ways of continuing his ministry, paying no heed to the affliction of his own monastic community or to their mockery of his efforts. Rather, he collected old coats and rags from dung heaps and then cleaned and sewed them together into cushions and rugs for the poor visitors who came. "And so he found this method of carrying out his own employment, not giving up this strenuous pursuit in peace or in persecution, in the city or in exile."⁸⁸

In fact, the Amidan communities could in many respects conduct their life in exile just as they had previously, if they could find a safe place to stay. Their ministry during times of famine was both moving and familiar; they had dealt with such circumstances before.⁸⁹ However, exile was at times relentless. When they sought refuge in the monastery of the Sycamores, Abraham bar Kaili sent Roman soldiers under his command to expel them again. Upon their arrival the soldiers were stunned at the sight of hundreds of ascetics engaged in worship, standing row upon row without fear. Unnerved, the troops turned upon the nearby villagers, plundering their land, killing their animals, eating their food, and taking over their houses; the soldiers told the inhabitants that they would leave only if the monks were persuaded to depart as well. Oppressed beyond their means, the villagers collectively begged the monks to relieve them of their burden. The ascetics saw their grief, and wishing to cause ordinary people no harm they left at once.⁹⁰ The Amidan community and the laity they met seem to have aided each other wherever possible.⁹¹

But in such a context, the wilderness and its solitude bore fruit very much intended for the temporal world; it did not serve as a place of retreat for its own sake, or of refuge from the plight of the eastern cities. In their continuity of practice, of spiritual tradition and of social involvement, the Amidan ascetics in exile acquired an ever-increasing prestige.

And the potency of that authority was fully concentrated on the persons and events of their own time.

The expulsion of the Amidan monasteries carried further implications. Their absence left a burden on those who remained in Amida and its territory, that their services for the populace be continued. Thus a local recluse, who had chosen a separate life outside the city and its monastic complexes, found himself forced to leave his retreat and return. Simeon the Solitary had once been renowned for his labors in an Amidan monastery, both in private ascetic practice and in his ministry to the poor and strangers in the city.⁹² When he chose to take up life as a hermit in the mountains nearby, he was "supplied by many persons with all that he needed" and served residents and travelers from his huts, while his fame spread throughout the region. Finally, however, the situation in Amida—the loss of its spiritual community—called him back:

But afterwards the storm of persecution was stirred up against [Simeon] together with all the rest of the church; and he bravely and heroically contended in the conflicts. . . . But he himself held firm; and thus he persevered and maintained a heroic contest, and he used to go around in the city itself at the very height of the persecution, and give absolution and baptise by night and by day.⁹³

The persecuting Chalcedonians, on the other hand, had not allowed the city walls to restrict their efforts. Under Abraham bar Kaili, the local anchoretic sanctuaries were violated now for a different kind of booty. Local celebrities such as Maro the Stylite were coaxed for an unwitting slip of the tongue so that Chalcedonians could claim, "Behold, even Maro on his pillar agrees with us!"⁹⁴ The authorities were well aware of the ascetics' influence and knew that even apparent verbal capitulation on the part of such figures could draw many people to their communion.⁹⁵

These solitaries and their disciples, no longer left to their business of serving community needs from their retreats, were forced into the social arena. Not only were their sanctuaries invaded but the strength of their religious commitment would not allow them to continue a life apart from the events around them. When the hermit Sergius was dragged from his hut, beaten by physical and by verbal blows, he could not continue his anchoretic existence.⁹⁶ His reentry into the city of Amida demonstrated in no uncertain terms the solitary's response to Amida's situation:

But the blessed Sergius went out, and arrived at the city on the holy day of Sunday, at dawn. He then went straight to the church, and as the whole city was sitting there after the morning hymns . . . suddenly at the door of the church there appeared a strange and shocking sight, and all were stunned, seeing an appearance not their own: a hermit was

entering, wearing rags patched together from sackcloth and carrying his cross on his shoulder. And he went right in, going straight to the middle of the church without a question, neither speaking nor turning to either side; and as the preacher was standing and speaking, he stopped, while astonishment fell upon the crowd, and they looked to see what was the matter. But the holy man, as soon as he reached the chancel, struck his cross upon the steps and began to mount. And when he had climbed one or two steps in silence, everyone thought that he was getting ready either to say something or to make a petition to the city or to the bishop [Abraham bar Kaili]. But when he reached the third step where the preacher stood, he flung out his hand, grabbed him by the neck, held him fast, and said to him, "Wicked evil man, our Lord commands, 'Do not give what is holy to dogs nor pearls before swine'; why do you speak the words of God before those who deny Him?" And he swung his hand round, punched him, twisted his mouth awry, seized him and threw him down."⁹⁷

Sergius succeeded in rousing the congregation into full riot before he himself was beaten unconscious and carried off to an Armenian prison camp reserved for Monophysites. He was not long held, however, and soon escaped back to his own cell.⁹⁸

Thus the city of Amida became a battleground against the forces of evil that had once been sought in the harshness of the wilderness. For there were those ascetics who chose to remain in Amida rather than go into exile with the majority of the monks, and these intensified their ascetic practice by the danger of their situation. Abraham was both cruel and thorough in the campaign he waged through the city.

Nonetheless, city life afforded some protection through the possibility of anonymity, and John of Ephesus speaks with admiration of the "underground" communities, the secret groups of ascetics exiled from their own monasteries or convents who remained in the city, residing in housing ostensibly rented for tenancy by others. Many of the exiled, as well as their various communications and business matters, passed through such groups, aided by sympathetic townspeople. For in order to ensure a presence eluding the authorities but efficacious for the populace, it was imperative that the Monophysite leaders inside the city depend upon the efforts of individuals and avoid the visibility of actions as a body.⁹⁹

Such a person was the holy Euphemia, who had for many years lived an ascetic career in Amida with her daughter Maria.¹⁰⁰ She followed a private rule of austerity in her own life (John of Ephesus and others would beg her to show herself some of the kindness she so liberally bestowed on others) and, at the same time, with Maria's aid devoted herself day and night to ministering to the city's poor, sick, homeless, and

afflicted. There seemed no corner of the city or its environs unknown to her, and no one person, rich or destitute, citizen or stranger, whose life had not been touched by her grace and charity.

When the persecutions struck, a steady stream of exiled monks, singly or in company, began to appear at Euphemia's door for refuge. In no time she had organized accommodations for both housing and worship, setting up a substantial network through which they could stay in the city pursuing their habitual monastic practices or, if traveling, could have the assurance of lodging and hospitable company (no small gift when suffering flight). But it was not long, only a few years, before the Chalcedonian authorities became suspicious of the doctrinal leanings of the holy woman and her daughter and imprisoned them with the intent of forcing their submission to Chalcedonian communion. However, the officials had not reckoned on the support of Euphemia's followers, and the entire city, small and great alike, demanded the release of the two women. Faced with a public uprising, the authorities quietly banished Euphemia and Maria from the city.

Euphemia's life is a particularly instructive one, for her personal career well reflects the fortune of Amida in the sixth century. Thirty years of her life were passed in service to those in the city who suffered famine, invasion, and plague. The appearance of the persecutions at first seemed yet one more trial with which to contend. But her story reveals the cost that Amida's calamities were to exact from its citizens and ascetics, and if her end was less histrionic than the memory of a city driven mad with suffering, it was no less indicative of the times.

After their banishment from the city, Euphemia and her daughter went to Jerusalem, passing some time in pilgrimage. John of Ephesus then tells us,

imagining that perhaps the anger against them had abated, they returned to Amida and entered it secretly; and they stayed at the house of a certain nobleman. But when it began to be noticed, and their opponents began to speak about them, the people with whom they were staying became anxious, begging them to depart lest their house be plundered. But the blessed Euphemia was weary, and she wept aloud to God, saying, "My Lord, your mercy knows that I have grown weak, and I have no more strength. It is enough for me." And on that very night, the request of her prayer was answered.¹⁰¹

Within a week Euphemia had died of illness, having attained, John assures us, the crown of martyrdom. But hers was a death not caused by suffering under persecution so much as by the gradually wearing effects of the calamity that buffeted her time and place.

In this way Euphemia's story typifies the ascetic's experience in sixth-century Amida. The commitment of the ascetic to the temporal world was as pressing as that to the eternal; the space of the holy was not inviolable for either secular or religious forces, nor could it remain aloof from the events surrounding or involving it. The space of the holy was found nowhere separate for the Amidan ascetics or populace. On the contrary, it was everywhere present.

ABBREVIATIONS

For dictionaries, encyclopedias, and collections, full details may be found in the Bibliography.

AER	<i>American Ecclesiastical Review</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
AMS	<i>Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum</i>
Anal. Boll.	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>Annales: e.s.c.</i>	<i>Annales: économies, sociétés, et civilisations</i>
BEO	<i>Bulletin d'études orientales</i>
BHG	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i> , 3d ed., edited by F. Halkin; and idem, <i>Novum Auctarium BHG</i>
BHO	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis</i> , edited by P. Peeters
BMGS	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CH	<i>Church History</i>
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CR	<i>Classical Review</i>
CSCO	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syrii</i> (unless otherwise noted)
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
CSL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Latinorum</i>
DHGE	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques</i>

DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
DR	<i>Downside Review</i>
DTC	<i>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique</i>
ECR	<i>Eastern Churches Review</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
GCS	<i>Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
HE	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
JAC	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JME	<i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
NT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OCA	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i>
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
OLP	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica</i>
PBA	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
PETSE	<i>Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> , edited by J. P. Migne
PO	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
POC	<i>Proche-Orient Chrétien</i>
RBK	<i>Reallexicon zur Byzantinischen Kunst</i>
RE	<i>Paulys Realenzyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
REJ	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
RHE	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
ROC	<i>Revue de l'orient chrétien</i>
SCH	<i>Studies in Church History</i> , edited by D. Baker, G. J. Cuming, S. Mews, et alii
SLNPNF	<i>Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i>

SSTS	Studies Supplementary to Sobornost
Sub. Hag.	Subsidia Hagiographica
TU	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</i>
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>
ZK	<i>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</i>

Note on primary sources: For individual saints' lives not in major collections (e.g., John of Ephesus, *Lives*), see under *Vita* _____.

written the *Historia religiosa* partly to regain favor with Syrian ascetics, and partly as a reaction against Egyptian monasticism and thus against Cyril of Alexandria. Canivet, *Monachisme syrien*, disagrees altogether and does not believe that a political motive lies behind the work.

60. *Lives*, 32, PO 18:586–92. There are two other instances of misbehaving monks: two monks deceived by a vision from Satan, who immediately seek confession and penance when they realize what has happened; and a monk who joined the Amidan monasteries without following canonical procedure but who repented and received absolution before death. See *Lives*, 15, PO 17:220–28; 18, PO 17:260–65. Both instances are more fully discussed here later.

61. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* 25, 53, 58.

62. *Lives*, 9, PO 17:135, see also 17:135–37.

III. Amida: The Measure of Madness

1. See the articles “Amid,” *DHGE* 2:1237–49 (Karalevsky); *RBK* 1:133–37 (Restle); and *RE* 1:1833 (Baumgartner). For an archaeological overview of the city, see Van Berchem and Strzygowski, *Amida*. On the military and trading importance of the city, see Dilleman, *Haute mésopotamie*; and especially, N. Pigulevskaja, *Villes de l'état iranien*. Segal, “Mesopotamian Communities,” 109–39, is most helpful for setting Amida in a cultural and political context.

2. Van Berchem and Strzygowski, *Amida*, 163; Vööbus, *History of Asceticism* 1: 228–29, 2:37–39. Vööbus considers the background of Persian-Byzantine hostilities, as well as the constant invasions in this area, crucial to the development of asceticism in north Mesopotamia.

3. Sozomen, *HE* 3.14; John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 58, PO 19:208; Vööbus, *History of Asceticism* 2:231–32. Van Berchem and Strzygowski, *Amida*, 163–65, cites the attestations of Amida's early importance as a Christian center. Evidence for the origins of asceticism at Amida is sparse and obscure, as for Mesopotamia in general; cf. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism* 2.

4. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 58, PO 19:207–9.

5. *Ibid.*, 209.

6. This account follows John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 58, PO 19:209–12.

7. *Ibid.*, 212.

8. *Ibid.*

9. For example, John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 17, PO 17:249–50; 19–20, PO 17:266–83; 24, PO 18:521; and 35, PO 18:607–23. See also Vööbus, *History of Asceticism* 2:233; and Van Berchem and Strzygowski, *Amida*, 165.

10. Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 8.2; “Joshua the Stylite,” *Chronicle XXXIII–XLIX*; *Chronicon Edessenum*, ed. and trans. I. Guidi, LXXVI–LXXIX; Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicon*, ed. and trans. E. W. Brooks, 314–15; *Chronicon anonymum* 846, ed. and trans. E. W. Brooks, 218–19; pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 3–4 (John of Ephesus); Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.7. See, for example, Se-

verus of Antioch, *Sixth Book of Select Letters* 5.12, on the meaning of the signs appearing in the skies.

11. Hostilities between Byzantium and Persia had been increasing for some time, and an outright breach of peace was inevitable: cf. "Joshua the Stylite," *Chronicle* VII–XX; pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 7.3; Procopius, *Wars* 1.2–7; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.7, for ancient accounts of the background to the Persian Wars. Pigulevskaja, *Villes de l'état iranien*, 216–17, provides helpful insight on the Persians' motives, taking into account Kawad's problems of domestic social unrest owing to religious disputes, severe famine at home (as in Mesopotamia), and various financial and political considerations. "Joshua the Stylite," *Chronicle* XX, seems to acknowledge such contributing factors within Persia itself, though in so doing he expresses much hostility to the Persians. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* 2:10–15, gives a summary of the events of this war. Dillemann, *Haute mésopotamie*, 313–15, discusses some specific textual problems about the siege of 502–503.

12. "Joshua the Stylite," *Chronicle* L, LVIII; pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 7.3–4; Procopius, *Wars* 1.7; pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 5 (John of Ephesus); Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.8; *Chronicon anonymum* 1234 LI, ed. and trans. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 81/36 and 109/56.

13. This capture of the city did not lose its importance as a historical landmark in Syrian tradition; in addition to the sources mentioned, see also *Chronicon Edessenum* LXXX; Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicon*, 315; *Chronicon anonymum* 819, ed. A. Barsaüm, 7; *Chronicon anonymum* 846, 219; *Narrationes variae*, ed. and trans. E. W. Brooks, XVII and XVIII.

14. Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 7.4; Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.23; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.7; *Chronicon anonymum* 1234 LI.

15. "Joshua the Stylite," *Chronicle* LIII; pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 5 (John of Ephesus).

16. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 58, PO 19:217–19.

17. Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 185, includes other incidents to support this speculation, but for Amida, at any rate, it seems unlikely. The Monophysite position in Byzantium was hardly so bleak at this time; in Persia, by contrast, the outbreak of war with the Romans in 502 sparked off bitter Monophysite persecution, and the refugees flocking into Roman territory made their presence felt. See Charanis, *Church and State*, 29–30; and Segal, "Mesopotamian Communities," 113.

18. "Joshua the Stylite," *Chronicle* LIII (trans. Wright, 42).

19. *Ibid.*, LVI, LXVI–LXIX, LXXI–LXXXI (on the Amidan women, see LXXVI–LXXVII); pseudo-Zachariah, *HE* 6.4; Procopius, *Wars* 1.9; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.8; *Narrationes variae* XVIII.

20. Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.33–35.

21. A helpful summary of these wars under Justin I and Justinian is found in Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* 2:75–123. See also Downey, "Persian Campaign." Being garrisoned, even by one's own protectors, proved an agoniz-

ing experience for the townspeople involved; see for example, "Joshua the Stylite," *Chronicle* LIV, LXX, LXXVII, LXXXII, XCVI. For the Persian invasions of Mesopotamia, see also pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 69, 90 (John of Ephesus); and Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicon*, 320. Syrian bitterness towards Persia left its influence; see Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians," 69–70, 113–14.

22. Cf. Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 313–17; and Stein, *Histoire du bas-empire* 2:97–98, 105, 267–68, and 293. Although Vasiliev, and Brooks, in John of Ephesus, *Lives*, PO 17:19, n. 2, date the raids as starting in 515 (cf. Stein, *Histoire*, 2:105), the problem was obviously already present in 502; see n. 24 below. Cf. also Procopius, *Anecdota* 18.22–23, 30; 23.6–10.

23. For example, John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 2, PO 17:19–20; 4, PO 17:78–83; 16, PO 17:245.

24. Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.8, states that during the Amidan siege of 502–503 the Hephthalitae were overrunning the Mesopotamian countryside. Khosroes also used Hunnic mercenaries, cf. Procopius, *Wars* 2.26.

25. For example, pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 8.5, 9.14; *Chronicon Edessenum* CIII (both on the invasion of 531/2).

26. John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 90.1.

27. Monophysite sources distinctly mark Justin's accession as the beginning of their woes; cf. pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 8; pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 15–16 (John of Ephesus); John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 90; Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicon*, 317; *Chronicon anonymum* 846, 222; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.12; and *Chronicon anonymum* 1234, 53. Compare, for example, Evagrius, *HE* 4.1, where Justin's accession passes without remarks on religious policy; Evagrius, *HE* 4.9, comments on these matters instead when recounting the crowning of Justinian. For the background to and significance of Justin's change in government policy regarding the Chalcedonian faith, see esp. Charanis, *Church and State*; Vasiliev, *Justin the First*; and Wigram, *Separation of the Monophysites*, 64–65.

28. On the persecutions of the Monophysites, see in general Vasiliev, *Justin the First*; Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*; Wigram, *Separation of the Monophysites*; and Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites*.

29. Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 235–36. See pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 19, 21–24, 26; and Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.14.

30. This assumption of duties probably occurred in 521; Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 230; Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites*, 101.

31. Evagrius, a Chalcedonian, claims that Paul resigned voluntarily; *HE* 4.4. On Euphrasius' accession and subsequent death, see Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 239–40; and pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 8.1. But Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites*, 148, claims that the oriental monks were first driven out by Euphrasius, which contradicts the account in Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.14, based on part 2 of John of Ephesus' *HE*, wherein Paul "the Jew" is blamed.

32. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 70 (John of Ephesus); Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.26 (Chabot, II, 220–21).

33. The best biography of Ephrem is in Lebon, "Éphrem d'Amid." See also

Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 122–24. Both pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 7.4; and John of Nikiu, *Chronicle* 90.23, praise Ephrem as a civil administrator.

34. For the implications of this, see esp. Cameron, "Images of Authority," 28–31; Booramra, "Christian Philanthropia"; Wigram, *Separation of the Monophysites*, 100; and Segal, "Mesopotamian Communities," 114–15.

35. For a shady incident, see pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 9.15, 9.19; and Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.23.

36. See esp. Gray, *The Defense of Chalcedon*, 141–54. Cf. also Lebon, "Éphrem d'Amid," 203–14; Moeller, "Chalcédonisme et le néo-chalcédonisme," 680–85; and Sellers, *Council of Chalcedon*, 313–15, 320–23, 332–43.

37. For example, John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* 36, 37; *Vita Sabae* (Cyril of Scythopolis), 85; Evagrius, *HE* 4.25.

38. Cf. pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 10.5; and Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.24. Evagrius, *HE* 4.6, considers Ephrem's deeds on behalf of Antioch before his consecration as a manifestation of divine providence. See Downey, "Ephraemius," for other episodes of Ephrem's civil activity while patriarch.

39. Monophysite sources unanimously condemn Ephrem, and their indignation at his use of the army was harshly expressed. See, for example, pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 10.1; pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 38–44 (John of Ephesus); Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.13–23. Michael is particularly scathing about the army in *Chronique* 9.24 (Chabot II, 206); he claims that Ephrem gave the appearance of being a learned sage but was in reality a pagan! *Chronique* 9.16 (Chabot II, 181). Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites*, 148–49, assesses Ephrem's activities as patriarch.

40. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.26 (Chabot II, 223).

41. The primary account is found in pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 32–44; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.13–23, 26, draws almost all his material from this same source, which is clearly John of Ephesus' *HE*, pt. II. See also Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicon*, 319–20; and *Chronicon anonymum* 846, 225–27.

42. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.26 (Chabot II, 223–4). Pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 37 (John of Ephesus), also accuses Abraham of adhering to the Chalcedonian faith not willingly but obsequiously.

43. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 18, PO 17:261, mentions a local plague slightly earlier than the bubonic outbreak of 542. *Lives*, 53, PO 19:185; pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 79–88, 112 (John of Ephesus); pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 10.9–14; Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicon*, 320–21; and Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.32, deal with the Great Plague and continual famine in Mesopotamia and Amida. See Biraben and LeGoff, "Peste dans le haute moyen age"; and esp. Allen, "'Justinianic' Plague." Allen observes that famine was a chronic sixth-century problem, both creating conditions ripe for the outbreak of plague and becoming also a result of its occurrence.

44. The major accounts of the plague of madness are found in pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 15–16; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.32; and *Chronicon anonymum* 1234, LXII. The version found in pseudo-Dionysius is

clearly the original for all other accounts and is included in the collection of fragments attributed to John of Ephesus, *HE*, pt. 2, in John of Ephesus, "Analyse de la seconde partie," ed. F. Nau, 468–69. There is no reason not to attribute this passage to John; but even if the writer of pseudo-Dionysius had drawn on other material at this point, the account would probably still have come from a contemporary given the nature of sources used by this historian. (I am indebted to L. Michael Whitby for this observation.)

45. *Spurious Life of James* (Jacob Burd'aya), *PO* 19: 259–62; *Narrationes variae* XVII.

46. Besides the calamities mentioned, comets were seen in the Byzantine East in the years 500, 538, 543/4, 556, 565, and 599; earthquakes occurred in the same area in 499, 503, 515, 525, 526, 528, 529, 530, 533, 536, 538/9, 539, 541, 542, 543, 546, 551, 554, 557, 558, 558/9, 561, 567, 568, 580/1, 583, 584/5, 588, and 601. See Grumel, *Chronologie*, 457–81, on natural disasters. See Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique*, 74–92; and Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 344–53, 360–62, 382–83, on the cumulative economic effect of the natural calamities.

47. For a discussion of such "psychic epidemics"—including dance frenzies, witch hunts, and revival movements—see, above all, Rosen, *Madness in Society*, 118, 192–225. Cf. also J. J. Lhermitte, *True and False Possession*, trans. P. J. Hepburne-Scott (New York, 1963; orig. French, 1956); Zax and Cowen, *Abnormal Psychology*, 25–58; and cf. Trethowan, "Exorcism," on physical and mental symptoms in cases of severe hysteria.

Also relevant are the comparable situations seen in Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*; for the obvious parallels in Europe during the fourteenth century, see Ziegler, *Black Death*. Professor A. A. M. Bryer has pointed out to me that Amida would again suffer a similar constellation of tragedy in the fourteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries but without again evidencing such a major social breakdown; see Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts*. In this instance, the influence of Islamic fatalism—through which plague was seen as a martyrdom and a mercy for the faithful Muslim—may have contained public reaction, as it did in general during the Black Death in the Muslim domain; see Dols, *Black Death*, 236–54 and, for a sensitive comparison with Western reactions, 281–302.

48. Rosen, *Madness in Society*, 21–136; J. S. Neaman, *Suggestion of the Devil: The Origins of Madness* (New York, 1975). Animal-like behavior, general disorientation, and excessive violence are among the primary symptoms. Rosen, 192–225, also discusses the occurrence of animal-like behavior during certain psychic epidemics, especially in revival movements. Cf. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 1, *PO* 17: 14–15; and pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 7.14, for madness displayed through similar symptoms. For a sense of how this pattern of madness fits with the changes in late antique understandings of insanity, see Festugière, "Épidémies «hippocratiques»."

49. See nn. 43 and 46 above on natural disasters in the Syrian Orient; and, for example, "Joshua the Stylite," *Chronicle*; Procopius, *Wars* 1–2; pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 3–118; pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 7–12; John of

Nikiu, *Chronicle* 90.23–32; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9; *Chronicon anonymum* 1234, LIII.

50. I have discussed Amida's plague of madness with psychiatrist Sir William Trethowan and with psychologist Dr. James B. Ashbrook and have gratefully drawn upon their professional expertise in the present discussion. Both see no reason to doubt the genuine occurrence of this outbreak, especially in the cumulative circumstances of the time.

The events of the sixth century may offer some solutions as to why Amida, present-day Diyar Bekir, exhibits almost no archaeological remains from pre-Islamic times apart from its walls and the cathedral shell. See Van Berchem and Strzygowski, *Amida*. Destruction of property, such as the Persian Wars wrought, could hardly have been repaired substantially in light of subsequent events and circumstances.

51. Consider the regular mention in later Syriac chronicles of the events of the Persian conquest of Amida in 503, and the plague of madness in 560. These sources are listed in the notes above, but the point is especially made by the two late fragments *Narrationes variae* XVII and XVIII.

52. For example, Brown, "Rise and Function"; Vööbus, *History of Asceticism* 2; Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism."

53. Patlagean, "À Byzance"; Brown, "Eastern and Western Christendom."

54. Theodoret, *Historia religiosa* 26. Cf., for example, John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 4, PO 17:56–84. Cf. Vööbus, *History of Asceticism* 2:325; and Brock, "Early Syrian Asceticism," 14.

55. See John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 52, PO 19:164–79, and 53, PO 19:179–85.

56. Procopius, *Wars* 1.9.18. "Joshua the Stylite" tells how the Edessenes, preparing for a Persian siege against them, pulled down all the monasteries and inns in the area just outside the city walls—presumably to avoid such atrocities, but perhaps also to avoid giving the besiegers a base for men and equipment close to the walls; "Joshua the Stylite," *Chronicle* 59.

57. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 4, PO 17:78–83.

58. Procopius, *Wars* 1.7.5–11.

59. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 2, PO 17:19–20. The paralysis in midair of an attacking enemy is a common literary *topos*; compare, for example, John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* 15, 70, 75.

60. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 16, PO 17:245.

61. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 6, PO 17:111–18. The appearance of the demons first in the guise of panicked villagers fleeing from the raiders is interesting for its similarity to the incident sparking off Amida's plague of madness.

62. It is worth noting that in the first half of the fifth century, a monk named Dada from the region of Amida was sent by the people of the city to Constantinople; his purpose was to plead for tax relief, as Amida had suffered harshly from war and famine. Dada seems to have been a prolific writer, but nothing by him survives for us. See Wright, *Short History of Syriac Literature*, 54–55; Duval, *Littérature syriaque*, 339.

63. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 35, PO 18:608. For the account of the Amidan monasteries, see *Lives*, PO 18:607–23; and 58, PO 19:207–27; pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 39–44; and Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.17–19. I have drawn from these sources for the present summary; the brief translations are from John's thirty-fifth "Life."

64. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 35, PO 18:608.

65. Under Paul "the Jew," the expulsion was perhaps as late as 521; Mesopotamia was the last place in which the persecutions were undertaken. There may well have been concern among civil and ecclesiastical officials about entering Mesopotamia, an area more fully committed to the Monophysite faith than elsewhere in the East, apart from Egypt, where the economic factor of the empire's need for grain mattered more than imperial religious policies. See Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, 229; and Wigram, *Separation of the Monophysites*, 95.

66. The village of Hzyn in Tysf; the location is unknown.

67. See also pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 8.5; and Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.15.

68. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 35, PO 13:620.

69. This was part of the campaign involved in Ephrem's "descent to the east." Cf. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 58, PO 19:224; pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 1.1; pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 38–44; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.14. Abraham bar Kaili was also commanding soldiers during this expulsion.

70. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 35, PO 18:620; but pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 40, says there were "a thousand men or more," whereas John, *Lives*, 14, PO 17:214, states that the number during the first persecution was 750.

71. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 35, PO 18:621.

72. *Ibid.*, 622–23. Cf. the related situation in Armenia, similar in impact and also encouraged by Ephrem: *idem*, *Lives*, 21, PO 17:293–94.

73. For example, Wigram, *Separation of the Monophysites*, 67–68; Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 79, 141–44; *idem*, "Popular Religion"; Brown, "Rise and Function"; and *idem*, "Dark Age Crisis."

74. For example, Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, 260–61. The decision to ordain Monophysite bishops—a step eventually leading to the creation of a separate Monophysite ecclesiastical hierarchy—was made largely because popular fears over communion at Chalcedonian hands had become so urgent and widespread. It was not a move engineered by ambitious or contentious Monophysite leaders.

75. Cf. Wigram, *Separation of the Monophysites*, 68.

76. Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 8.5 (*Syriac Chronicle*, trans. F. J. Hamilton and E. W. Brooks, 211–12). Cf. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.14.

77. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 35, PO 18:607–23.

78. *Ibid.*, 618.

79. *Ibid.*, 58, PO 19:221–17.

80. *Ibid.*, 225–26.

81. Ibid., 20, PO 17:278–83.
82. Ibid., 24, PO 18:521.
83. For example, ibid. 14 and 18, PO 17:213–20, 260–65; 29, PO 18:562–74.
84. Ibid., 14, PO 17:213–20 (Abbi); 17, PO 17:248–59 (the poor stranger); 19, PO 17:266–80 (Zacharias). Cf. also 20, PO 17:281–83; 28, PO 18:559–62; 51, PO 19:159–60.
85. Ibid., 18, PO 17:260–65.
86. Ibid., 260. On the ruling against leaving a monastery without release, see *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, ed. and trans. A. Vööbus, 33 (canon 26).
87. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 33, PO 18:592–601; 3, PO 17:42–44; 34, PO 18:601–6.
88. Ibid., 33, PO 18:599.
89. Ibid., 35, PO 18:614–17.
90. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 39–40 (John of Ephesus). See also Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.19. Cf. the parallel situation in John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 21, PO 17:293–97.
91. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 40–44 (John of Ephesus); Michael the Syrian, *Chronique* 9.19.
92. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 23, PO 17:300–304.
93. Ibid., 304.
94. Ibid., 5, PO 17:98 (my trans.).
95. Ibid., 96–99.
96. Ibid., 96–101.
97. Ibid., 101–3 (my trans.).
98. Ibid., 103–11.
99. Ibid., 12, PO 17:176–78. Cf. pseudo-Dionysius, *Incerti auctoris chronicon*, 43–44 (John of Ephesus), for another account of secret aid by villagers when the Amidans were driven out of the monastery of the Poplars by Ephrem's troops, during the second persecution.
100. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 12, PO 17:171–86. On the significance of Euphemia's work, see chap. 6.
101. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 12, PO 17:184 (my trans.).

IV. Purpose and Places

1. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 48, PO 18:685; pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 8.5. It is probably to the Egyptian desert as a gathering place that this famous passage of pseudo-Zachariah refers.
2. Egypt's reputation for ascetic excellence was a serious factor for the Monophysite monks who came from elsewhere in the East, including Mesopotamia. For the nature of Egypt's spiritual authority in this realm, see Rousseau, "Spiritual Authority"; idem, "Blood-relationships."
3. John of Ephesus, *Lives*, 27, PO 18:554. For an impression, from the Egyp-

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